

NCA
VOC FOR IOP/FN
BACKGROUNDER NO. 1-0333
LARRY FREUND/BELGRADE

MARCH 10, 1976

HISTORY ON FILM

ANNCR:

A NEW FILM HAS JUST BEEN RELEASED BASED ON THE ASSASSINATION OF THE AUSTRIAN ARCH DUKE FERDINAND IN NINETEEN FOURTEEN AND EVENTS THAT LED TO THE OUTBREAK OF WORLD WAR ONE. THE ASSASSINATION TOOK PLACE IN SARAJEVO, YUGOSLAVIA AND WE HAVE A REPORT FROM THERE BY VOA CORRESPONDENT LARRY FREUND.

VOICE:

BANNERS ARE DRAPED ACROSS THE STREETS OF SARAJEVO WITH THE WORDS SARAJEVO ASSASSINATION. THE BANNERS ARE NOT A HOLDOVER FROM NINETEEN FOURTEEN WHEN THE ARCH DUKE FERDINAND WAS KILLED ON THE STREETS OF THE CITY, BUT RATHER ADVERTISEMENTS FOR A NEW MOVIE THAT JUST OPENED IN YUGOSLAVIA CITIES, INCLUDING SARAJEVO. THE FILM PLAYING AT HALF OF THE CITY'S TEN MOVIE THEATRES IS A YUGOSLOV-CZECHOSLOVAK CO-PRODUCTION WITH AN INTERNATIONAL CAST OF ACTORS AND ACTRESSES.

MANY OF THE SCENES IN THE MOVIE WERE ACTUALLY FILMED ON THE STREETS OF SARAJEVO, A CITY THAT HAS MANY OLD BUILDINGS AND COBBLESTONE STREETS THAT HAVE CHANGED LITTLE FROM THAT DAY IN JUNE, NINETEEN FOURTEEN WHEN A YOUNG BOSNIAN STUDENT FIRED ONE SHOT THAT KILLED THE SUCCESSOR TO THE AUSTRIAN THRONE AND SET OFF A CHAIN OF EVENTS THAT CULMINATED IN THE FIRST WORLD WAR.

THE MOVIE WHICH HAS BEEN SOLD FOR INTERNATIONAL DISTRIBUTION HAS ALREADY BEEN SEEN BY THOUSANDS OF PEOPLE

IN YUGOSLAVIA WHERE THE EVENTS HAVE A SPECIAL MEANING AND A SPECIAL SENSITIVITY. CRITICS IN THE COUNTRY HAVE ATTACKED THE HISTORICAL ACCURACY OF THE MOVIE PARTICULARLY THE WAY IT CHARACTERIZES THE GROUP OF YOUNG BOSNIANS WHO PLOTTED TO KILL AUSTRIAN ARCH DUKE DURING HIS VISIT TO WHAT WAS THEN A BALKAN OUTPOST FOR THE AUSTRO-HUNGARIAN EMPIRE. THE GOVERNMENT SIEZED THE YOUNG MEN AS PRECURSORS OF A REVOLUTIONARY MOVEMENT THAT WOULD EVENTUALLY UNITE A SOCIALIST YUGOSLAVIA. THUS, A CRITIC FOR THE SEMI-OFFICIAL BELGRADE NEWSPAPER "BORBA" CONTENDS THAT THE YOUNG BOSNIANS HAD THEIR OWN IDEAS OF SOCIAL ORDER AND HE ADDS THE IDEAS WERE IGNORED BY THE FILM'S YUGOSLV DIRECTOR VELJKO BULAJIC.

A LEADING EDITOR IN SARAJEVO HAS COMPLAINED THAT THE YOUNG ASSASSINS ARE SEEN IN THE MOVIE AS AN UNORGANIZED GROUP OF YOUNG PEOPLE. DIRECTOR BULAJIC HAS REPLIED THAT THE YOUNG BOSNIAN MOVEMENT DID NOT IN FACT HAVE A STRONG ORGANIZATION AND HE ADDED IT WOULD BE WRONG TO SHOW IT ANY OTHER WAY. AND ANOTHER MAN INVOLVED IN THE FILM IN SARAJEVO ARGUES THAT THE HISTORICAL FACTS SHOW THAT THE ORGANIZATION WAS INDEED AMATEURISH.

THE NEW FILM, "SARAJEVO ASSASSINATION," IS ALSO NOTABLE FOR THE DISCUSSIONS AMONG ITS YOUNG PLOTTERS ON THE WISDOM OF THE ASSASSINATION, A RELEVANT SUBJECT IN THE WORLD OF NINETEEN SEVENTY-SIX AS WELL AS IN NINETEEN FOURTEEN. SAYS ONE FILM MAKER, WE TRIED TO SHOW THE DILEMMA, WHETHER POLITICAL ASSASSINATION SHOULD BE USED AS A METHOD.

THE AUDIENCE IN SARAJEVO FOR THE MOVIE "SARAJEVO ASSASSINATION" IS AT ONCE THE BEST AUDIENCE FOR THE FILM, AS WELL AS PERHAPS ITS MOST CRITICAL AUDIENCE. FOR THEM THE EVENTS OF NEARLY SIXTY-TWO YEARS AGO ARE RECALLED DAILY IN A BRIDGE NAMED AFTER THE YOUNG MAN -- GAURILO PRICIP -- WHO PUT A BULLET THROUGH THE ARCH DUKE, AND, IN THE TWO FOOTSTEPS MARKED IN THE PAVEMENT WHERE PRINCIP STOOD.

JS/LP